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THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN: This goldsmiths are not now engaged in repayment. They are now engaged in getting loans, and when they put forth their difficulties when repayment starts, we will consider them.

SRI K. S. ABDUL WAHAB: Sir, it seems there is a proposal before the Government to assign some of the lands of the affected goldsmiths to the Harijans near Cuddalore. Will the Government interefere and safeguard the rights of the affected goldsmiths?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN: If a specific question is put, I will look into it.

SRI M. SUBBIAH CHETTIAR: Sir, is there any proposal to start small scale industries for the convenience of the goldsmiths?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN: Yes, Sir. The Government have got a proposal to start four industrial co-operatives in which the goldsmiths will be engaged in production not only of gold and silver articles but also a number of multi-metal articles.

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Questions are over.

[*Note*.—An asterisk (*) at the commencement of a speech indicates revision by the Member.]

II.—CALLING ATTENTION TO THE COLLAPSE OF A HIGHER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BUILDING IN MADURAI.

SRI G. KRISHNAMOORTHY: Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I beg to call the attention of the Hon. the Chief Minister to a matter of urgent public importance, namely, the collapse of a higher elementary school building in Madurai, involving the loss of many young lives and causing severe injuries to many. The House is anxious to know in detail the steps taken by the Government to afford relief to the injured in this tragic accident.

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN: Mr. Deputy Chairman, it is with deep regret that I rise to make the following statement.—

The Saraswathi Higher Elementary School in which the mishap occurred is a mixed school situated on the Rajah Mill Road, Madurai Municipality. The school was started in 1953 and it gradually developed into a very big institution with 3,700 students on its rolls and a staff of 99 teachers (91 women and 8 men).

The school is accommodated in 8 separate buildings. The building that met with the calamity consists of 2 wings with 3 floors each. It was put into use in 1956 with only the ground floor. The superstructure was built only last year. The building measures $71\frac{3}{4}$ feet by 40 feet by 31.3 feet in dimensions. The ground floor is built of lime and rock stones. The superstructure is built of lime mortar and bricks. This structure has

been constructed from the management funds. The average breadth of the wall of the structure is 10 inches. The Collector of Madurai has reported that several defects were noticed in the construction of the building. Very little cement appears to have been used, the construction being made of lime mortar and brick. This building accommodated 48 sections and the strength of the pupils that can be accommodated in this building is roughly calculated to be 1,200. One wing of this building has collapsed. It is learnt that the third floor of this wing came down at 11-45 a.m. on 4th April 1964 on the second floor which in turn collapsed and the inmates who were there at that time were caught under the debris. That was a holiday and only children attending the special classes were there at the time of the tragedy. The number that died is 35; 34 students and 1 meal carrier woman.

Within half an hour of this mishap, all officers and men of the town police, fire brigade, etc., were engaged in rescue operations. Besides them, great service was also rendered by the men of the T.V.S. organisations and the Harvey Mills. The District Superintendent of Police, Madurai (Urban), was in direct charge of the operations. The Divisional Inspector of Schools, Madurai and the District Educational Officer, Madurai, were also on the spot rendering necessary assistance.

Between 12 noon and 4 p.m. on 4th April 1964, 196 inmates of the school were rescued and sent to the hospital. Of them 35 were dead (34 students and 1 meal-carrier woman). Out of the rest, 130 were treated as in-patients in the hospital which included the Headmistress and 5 other teachers. Thrity-one were treated as out-patients. The dead bodies were handed over to the parents at 6 p.m. At the hospital, adequate arrangements were made for the nursing of the injured persons.

In order to afford adequate relief to the injured persons and to the parents of the bereaved, the Government have taken immediate action. Necessary instructions have been issued to the Dean, Erskine Hospital, Madurai, and others concerned that—

(i) the treatment of all children and adults injured in the accident must be completely free in the Government Erskine Hospital, Madurai;

(ii) in the case also of those children who were discharged on the 4th instant after treatment and who are re-admitted into the hospital for further examination and treatment, the treatment must be completely free;

(iii) in the case of all the injured children and adults who are treated either as in-patients or as out-patients, the administration of expensive drugs, injections, etc., should not be charged but should be free of cost;

(iv) The first X-ray as well as any subsequent X-rays taken of the injured must be free;

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(v) if any expensive medicines required for being administered on the injured are not available in the hospital, they should be purchased at the cost of the Government and no charges should be collected from the patients.

The Director of Public Instruction, who has visited the scene of the tragedy, has given an assurance to the parents of the school children who were injured that they need not have to sit for the annual examinations and that they would be promoted to the next higher class. The Revenue Divisional Officer, Madurai, has conducted a detailed enquiry into the incident. His report has just been received and is being examined. The Executive Engineer (Special Buildings Division), Madurai, has been asked to conduct an enquiry into the technical reasons for the collapse.

Action is also being taken by Government to get all the school buildings in the State inspected.

III.—GOVERNMENT BILL.

THE MADRAS BHOODAN YAGNA (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1964 (L.A. BILL NO. 10 OF 1964)

THE HON. SRI P. KAKKAN : Sir, I move—

"*That the Madras Bhoodan Yagna (Amendment) Bill,*[a] *1964 (L.A. Bill No. 10 of 1964), as passed by the Assembly, be taken into consideration*". 5-20 p.m.

தலைவர் அவர்களே, 1964-ம் ஆண்டு தமிழ்நாடு "ளிதான யக்ஞ" (திருத்த) மசோ.தாவை, ஆலோசனைக்கு எடுத்துக்கொள்ளுமாறு பணிவோடு கேட்டுக் கொள்கிறேன்.

ஸ்ரீ ஆச்சார்ய விநோபா பாவே அவர்கள், ஆரம்பித்து வைத்த மாபெரும் இயக்கமான பூதான யக்ஞத்தைப் பற்றி இந்த சபை நன்கு அறியும். பூதானத் திட்டத்தை அமுல் நடத்த 1958-ம் ஆண்டு தமிழ் நாடு பூதான யக்ஞ சட்டம் (1958-ம் ஆண்டு, சென்னை 15-வது சட்டம்) இந்த சபையில் நிறைவேறியதை இங்குள்ளவர்கள் அறிவார்கள். மேற்சொன்ன சட்டத்தை நிறைவேற்றுவதில் ஏற்பட்ட சில குறைகளையும், அனுபவத்தில் கண்ட கஷ்டங்களையும் நீக்குவதற்காக சில வகைகளில் திருத்தம் செய்ய வேண்டிய அவசியம் இப்போது ஏற்பட்டிருக்கிறது.

பூதான நிலங்களைப் பெற்றவர்கள், ஒன்று சேர்ந்து, கூட்டு முறையில் சாகுபடி செய்வதற்கான வசதியளிக்கப்படவில்லை. இந்த வசதி அவசியம் என்று கருதப்படுகிறது. இதற்காக, பூதான நிலங்களைப் பெற்றவர்கள் அங்கத்தினர்களாக இருக்கும் கூட்டுறவு சங்கங்களை உருவாக்கவும், அவற்றின் மூலம் கூட்டுச் சாகுபடி செய்யவும் வழி அமைக்க வேண்டியுள்ளது. எனவே, கூட்டுறவு சங்கங்களுக்கும், பூதான நிலங்களை அளிக்கும் அதிகாரம், மாநில போர்டுக்குத் தர உத்தேசிக்கப்பட்டுள்ளது.

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a Printed as Appendix III on pages 68–72.